

Self Assessment Paper

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10/4/2025

Self-assessment is an important part of professional and personal growth. It forces people to pause and evaluate our progress so far in life. We look for the ways we can improve and find our strengths. Instead of waiting to be told what we are doing wrong and right, taking a moment to reflect and do it yourself builds confidence and self-awareness. In this essay, I will assess my recent progress in my life by reviewing and talking about challenges I have faced and goals that I am working towards. By completing this self-assessment, I hope to better understand where I stand in my life and realize what steps I need to take next. Over the past year, I have strengthened my cybersecurity skills/knowledge, improved my teamworking capabilities, and made goals for where I want to be during my next stages of professional development.

In the past year, I finished up my junior year of college and started my senior year. I got a job working in an IT department, completed an internship working with cybersecurity students across Virginia, and got another internship working as a SOC analyst for the ODU cybersecurity department. These are just a few of my accomplishments while pursuing a degree in cybersecurity. I have gotten hands-on experience with cybersecurity tools that I will use in the field for the rest of my life. Tools and software such as Crowdstrike, Wireshark, Qradar, and others have all fueled my passion for cybersecurity. Despite these great accomplishments, I have faced some challenges. I struggled with working at my IT job for a while due to a departmental transition that was happening as I joined the team. A lot of the team was unorganized and almost caused me to want to leave. I am glad I stayed ~~working~~ there though because I gained lots of valuable experience and made lifelong connections with my team. Another challenge I faced this past year was during my internship working with other cybersecurity students. Our goal was to work together as a team of five people to present a cybersecurity problem/solution and incorporate design thinking in the process. The challenge here was that we had a few members of

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the team who struggled with deadlines, communication, and doing work in general. A few of us ended up putting more work in than others, but we eventually completed the project and finished the internship strong.

One trait I struggle with everyday is being distracted easily. My phone is an example of a distraction I have everyday. Plenty of people struggle with doomscrolling social media, playing mobile games, or wasting time. I am actively working to remove most of this behavior from my life. Some ways I have been fighting these distractions have been setting limits on apps, setting reminders/alarms, and turning my phone off completely. These distractions hinder my ability to finish schoolwork and focus on my job duties. An ideal example for success would be meeting a goal I set for screentime during the school/work day. Another obstacle that affects my life is probably my ego. This is not at all in a bad way most of the time. For example, I might wake up and think I have time to sleep twenty more minutes before class and still have time to get breakfast. I end up not getting breakfast and sometimes getting to class late. I believe the solution to this would be to just play situations more safely and try not to let my ego get the best of me. Instead of trying to boost my ego, I need to take humble approaches to these kinds of situations.

A short term goal I have for the next year is to complete my college degree. I am well on my way to graduating on time with my credit hours and required courses to graduate. The only parts I have left to do are passing the classes. One long term goal I have for the future is to land my dream job in the cybersecurity field. In five years, I want to be financially stable and work as a penetration tester, or be working in some kind of offensive cybersecurity role. I still have a lot of work to do in order to accomplish this goal. I need to study and obtain technical certifications like my Security+, CEH, OSCP, etc. I plan to get these certifications and skills while working in the field for the next couple years. I would also like to gain more hands-on work so that I can say

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I have the technical experience needed for ideal cybersecurity roles. I may start doing activities like BugBounty, HackTheBox, and CTF competitions to keep gaining relevant experience.

During my time working in my job for the IT department I mentioned earlier, the team was undergoing a transitional phase. I was hired along with a couple other new people and we all became fast friends. When we started the job, I took on a project leading an auditing process for over two thousand safety cameras for the IT department. Our team of new hires worked closely together to repair, maintain, and work with other teams to audit all the cameras. One of my old coworkers had been in charge of the project before he moved jobs and entrusted the project to me. I took the initiative to lead my team into doing this project, and also gained mentorship during the process. During this audit, a higher-up mentored me and was always there to answer questions for me. They were a significant help to my audit and helped me succeed during the whole process. I could not have done it without them. [That's great. Mentors are one of the most important](#)

In the future, it may be beneficial for me to find a more permanent mentor in the cybersecurity field. I have met plenty of people I look up to or call a teacher, but most of them have not been a cybersecurity figure or been around for a long time. My long term mentor has always been my dad, but finding someone I can rely on when I have cybersecurity questions could be a great support to my journey. With access to a more permanent mentor, I could contribute more to my cybersecurity goals and longtime journey. Another way I could get extra support in my career might be by following up with networking opportunities. Striking conversations with current IT/cybersecurity professionals could potentially lead me to a future job opportunity. The best part about that kind of support is that it takes little to no effort other than showing up and talking to people.

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One of my proudest accomplishments in the past year was probably leading my team at my IT job during our safety camera auditing process. Not only was I able to gain some more experience to put on my resume, but I made lots of great friends and sharpened my teamwork/communication skills. My leadership during this project was a significant contribution and great display of my work ethic. Since I was able to do this project so early on in my job, I gained the trust of my whole team. The team was able to trust me with more work and I quickly became a close part of the family. Another contribution to the IT team I made was suggesting a way to tackle tickets for us. Our team simply went around and tried to solve tickets individually. I suggested that once a week, we take time to all work on tickets together in a meeting so everyone can get on the same page. I believe this change benefited the company greatly, and also helped resolve lots of tickets some people had no idea what to do with. Good, specific

Overall, this past year has shown me how far I've come academically and professionally. I have strengthened my cybersecurity skills, improved my teamwork and collaborative abilities, and made goals for where I want to be during the next few years of my life. My path for the future is relatively clear to me, but I am prepared for the changes along the way. As long as I put in the time and effort, I am confident in my abilities moving forward.